

Thunder by [talesfromthesnogbox](#)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: El experiences things for the first time, F/M, Mike isn't really here he's just mentioned, Protective Parent Jim "Chief" Hopper, between season 1 and 2, good dad Jim Hopper, mentions of mileven

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Summary:

El's been through hell and back, so why is she afraid of the little things? Luckily, she's got a great dad to step in and comfort her.

Thunder

Author's Note:

Just a little thing that popped into my head because we all love good dad Jim Hopper. Who else used to run into their parents room at the first sound of a storm?

Eleven had been through hell and back.

As if being a lab rat most of her life wasn't bad enough, she'd battled interdimensional demons and lived to tell the tale. She was a fighter, but the outside world was still a scary place.

Winter came and went, and luckily, she'd only had to brave a few weeks of the cold before Jim Hopper finally caught her hungry and half dead from the cold.

He was a kind man, although harsh at times. Hop clothed her, fed her, nursed her back to health when she wasn't strong enough. El had a papa, but she'd never had a father, and Jim Hopper became that for her before she even knew what it meant to have a real parent.

They were comfortable in the security of the cabin. El finally found somewhere she felt safe, and someone she felt safe with, but her fear of being taken back to the Upside Down was still very real. Even when she splashed outside in the cool summer rain with a smile on her face, she knew danger was still lurking around somewhere in the distance.

The summer heat made her curly hair frizz up. She no longer felt cold to the bone, instead pleasantly heated through. It was her first time experiencing seasons, and she was awestruck by how beautiful nature's ever changing moods were.

That night, El had been particularly content after Hop had let her outside to experience a heavy rainfall. The cool drops felt good on her skin, and even after she'd come inside and dried off, she could feel the soft beats of rhythmic water dropping on her skin.

She snuggled into her bed, smiling after a brief glance into Mike's world knowing he was safe. Hopper had gone to bed long ago, and she was drifting off quickly, the rain lulling her to sleep.

Until a loud crash broke through the rain's pleasant song.

El's eyes flew open. The crash was too loud to have come from within the small cabin. It didn't sound like anything they physically had with them, nothing was big enough to have made the noise... nothing on Earth anyways.

Another loud crash broke her train of thought, and El squeaked, gathering her blanket to her chest and dashing to the corner of the room in fear. Her heart pounded and hot tears came to her eyes as a flash of light from outside lit up her room for a brief moment.

A choked sob erupted from her chest, and she covered her mouth in fear of whoever was outside hearing her. She unfortunately couldn't hold back her scream as a third loud crash rang through the trees.

The demogorgon... it's coming for me, and it's not coming alone.

El was crying so hard, she didn't realize Hopper had come into her room until she felt a hand on her shoulder. The frail girl jumped at the contact before she saw him, his face painted with concern.

"El... El what's wrong?" He knelt before her on the floor and helped her dry her tears.

"I-it's coming for me."

"*What's* coming for you?"

"It's outside! It's not alone, the crashing, the lights... the demogorgon."

Hopper frowned. "The thunder?"

"Th-thunder?"

He shook his head and helped her back to her bed. "Thunder. T-H-U-N-D-E-R. It's the crashing noise outside. And the light is lightning. It happens sometime during a rain storm."

“So... so no demogorgons?”

“No kid, no demogorgon army coming to get you. Try and get some sleep.”

El snuggled back into her pillow until another crash jolted her up moments later. “Hop!” She called, heart pounding once again.

The man poked his head back into her room and took in her disheveled appearance. “You couldn’t hear the thunder where you were before?” He asked her as he moved further into her room.

She shook her head no. “No windows, thick walls. Quiet.”

Fucking bastards.

Hopper looked down at her quilt, pulling at a loose thread. “You know, my girl Sarah, she was afraid too. Of thunder. She used to sneak into mine and my wife’s bed, make us hold her until she fell asleep.”

“W-will you hold me? Like you held Sarah?”

His heart clenched. Jim never thought he’d get the opportunity to be a dad again, he didn’t even think that he’d become so close with El. In that moment, there was nothing he wanted more than to be a father to El.

“Scoot over kiddo.” It was awkward at first, neither one of them knowing the other’s boundaries or threshold for parental affection, but upon the next strike of thunder, El jumped into his embrace. “Hey, hey, it’s okay, I’m right here.”

El had never experienced being comforted when she was scared. Papa was a monster, the only time he’d ever embraced her was when she was too weak to walk on her own, any ounce of vulnerability she’d shown was met with abrasiveness and the need to move forward. Hopper allowed her to be scared.

Suddenly, she was cared for. His familiar warmth and that hint of cigarette scent lingered on him as she felt her heartbeat slowing to a normal pace. His hand stroking her wild hair grounded her, and suddenly, she felt as if she could sleep.

She still twitched each time the thunder rang through the small cabin, but less and less so as it raged on. El could understand why Sarah would run to her father during thunderstorms, he seemed to make everything better. Few people in her life could do that; Hopper and... Mike. She missed him dearly, and wondered if he’d hold her through a thunderstorm.

“What?” Hop had asked, sleep heavy in his gruff voice.

El didn’t realize she’d been babbling on in her half awake state of mind.

“N-nothing.”

Hopper laughed quietly and kissed the top of her head. “I’m sure he would hold you, kid, but after fumbling like an idiot. Kid doesn’t look like he’s too suave when it comes to the ladies.” This sent El into a fit of giggles as she thought about how red he’d been after their hurried kiss in the cafeteria a few months earlier. “I know you miss him, but he can hold you all he wants when it’s safe enough kiddo. Actually, no, scratch that. Until you two are a little bit older and more responsible, he can hold you as long as there’s no funny business going on.”

“Funny business?” She yawned, sleep starting to take over.

He sighed. “I’ll tell you when you’re older. Rest up kiddo.” Hopper could see that her eyes were getting heavier as he stroked her hair lovingly like he used to do for Sarah. It was so strangely familiar to be in his position, yet so different. Sarah was a child... when she’d gotten sick, all thoughts of boyfriends and dating had left his mind. But El... El was a teenager, and he’d just gotten to know her. A small part of him was glad she wanted that fatherly affection, that she wanted him to scare away the monsters in her closet, because he missed feeling like he was needed.

But he wouldn’t be needed for much longer. She was a *teenager*. He knew that as soon as she is able to see Mike again, they’d be attached at the hip... would she still need him? It terrified Hopper to think about raising a teenage girl, so for now, he had to take what he could get and let her come to him when she needed to.

Hopper didn’t realize how long he’d been lost in his own thoughts, but when he looked down at El, she was fast asleep. It wasn’t like

those nights where he knew she was having a nightmare, she looked peaceful, serene, and he knew he'd done his job as a dad to push her fears out of her head, even if just for tonight.

He kissed the top of her head and snuck out of her bed as carefully as he could to not disturb her sleep. "Sweet dreams kiddo." He whispered as he closed her door and headed back to bed.